



*Lacoba Homes Skilled Nursing Home*

In April 2013, I visited [Lacoba Homes](#) in Monett. Lacoba is a 72-resident Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home operated by Lawrence County Baptist Association. They also have three independent living cottages with 16 apartments.



*Independent Living Cottage*

They began their culture change journey in 2005 and have made a lot of changes. Taking advantage of opportunities to learn more about culture change and person-centered care, they participate with Missouri's culture change coalition, [MC5](#), and are currently participating in the [Pioneer Network](#) Learning Collaborative through MC5. Their Administrator and Director of Nursing are enrolled in the University of Missouri's Sinclair School of Nursing [Enhanced Leadership Academy](#). They also hold culture change meetings at the home.

Staff members are consistently assigned so that they know the residents they serve and are familiar with their needs and preferences and CNAs attend care plan meetings. They have nearly eliminated alarm usage. Glucose monitoring is only done once per week for residents who are stable. Residents go to bed and get up when they choose and aren't awakened for lab work. They have also implemented electronic charting.

Recognizing that residents' quality of life is closely related to a high-quality, consistent, and satisfied staff, they provide a career ladder for their employees, including paying for LPN and RN education for those who are interested in promoting within the organization.



*Staff Training Room*

Since the home was constructed in 1967, they have made many environmental changes. The old cinder block walls have been covered and decorated with wallpaper to soften the appearance and reduce the noise level. Simulated wood floorings and crown molding was added. The nurses' station was remodeled and countertops lowered to accommodate residents in wheelchairs. Paved walking trails are lined with flower gardens leading to the gazebos and sitting areas. They added a large covered patio, coy pond, waterfall, outdoor gardening areas, and community computers with internet access.



*Coy Pond*



*Covered Patio*



*Nurses' Work Area*

For good reason, they were particularly proud of their spas, which are equipped with choice of overhead spray, body massage, or hand-held showers; whirlpool tubs with body jets; heated floors; overhead radiant heating; towel warmers; foot whirlpools; bidets with heated seats, heated water, and blow dryers; mood accent lighting; outdoor simulated lighted windows; hair and beauty stations equipped with hair dryers and curling irons; and flat screen TVs with DVD players and choice of relaxation music or favorite television shows that can be viewed from the tubs or showers. They are decorated with alligator print wallpaper, faux painted ceilings, granite counter tops, tile with pebble rock accents and the Lacoba Dove in the floors. To enhance the spa experience, they have consistent bath aides who know the residents and their preferences.



*Whirlpool tub and flat screen TV*



Shower



Staff work area



*Hair and beauty station*



*Towel Warmer*



*Foot Whirlpool*



*Lacoba Dove*

Each resident room is decorated with different wallpaper and curtains. All of the beds have been replaced with electric beds with wooden head and footboards. They added decorative mirrors and homey fixtures, replaced the institutional call lights with decorative sconces, and remodeled the closets to make them more easily accessible. The environment is also enhanced by the fact that they do not have overhead paging.

Another area of pride was improvements they have made to food service. They have restaurant-style dining with extended times of service. As residents enter the dining room, they can view the salad bar and dessert cart and make their choices. They are seated by a hostess who takes their beverage order and provides them with a menu that includes the meal of the day, alternate meal choice, and list of items that are always available. Two waitresses then take food orders and serve the meals.

Dining tables are decorated with table cloths, linen napkins, and fresh cut flowers and there are condiments on each table. There are under-the-table pull-outs to accommodate shorter residents. Family members are encouraged to eat with their loved ones and are offered a very reasonable reduced meal rate. Dietary staff members visit with residents weekly to ensure they are satisfied.

In addition to the routine dining choices, there are special meals chosen by the Resident Council. The residents especially enjoy the made-to-order waffles. Therapeutic diets have mostly been eliminated and diabetics are provided with the same snacks as everyone else. Snack carts are stocked with soda, milk, tea, Kool-Aid, sandwiches, chips, crackers, fresh fruit, sweet treats, and other goodies that are available at all times at no extra charge.



*Snack Cart*

Residents enjoy cooking in the activity room and therapy kitchen. They especially like making homemade pizza and salads. The activity kitchen is also available to the residents and families for use during visits. There is a community refrigerator or residents can have their own personal refrigerators if they wish.

There are a lot of activity opportunities, including shopping trips, scenic bus rides, church services, board games, fishing trips, cooking classes (residents prepare and eat meals), current events, volleyball, bingo, arts and crafts, phrase scrabble, Wii, and popcorn and movies on the big screen TV with surround sound, and others. Therapy and Activity staff members work together for group exercise activities. Manicures, hand massages, pedicures, facials, and aromatherapy are very popular. They have even added a second beautician.

The Maintenance Supervisor cooks hamburgers and hot dogs for the monthly barbecue, even in bad weather. An antique car show is held at Lacoba every year. They host the [Missouri Health Care Association](#) District IV Golden Age Games, which includes more than 20 other nursing homes from around Southwest MO. There are also many opportunities for families to participate in activities. They have a pre-Mother's Day luncheon at a local restaurant, Mothers' Day tea, and a Fathers' Day breakfast. They also host a Family Christmas Dinner and offer family portraits.

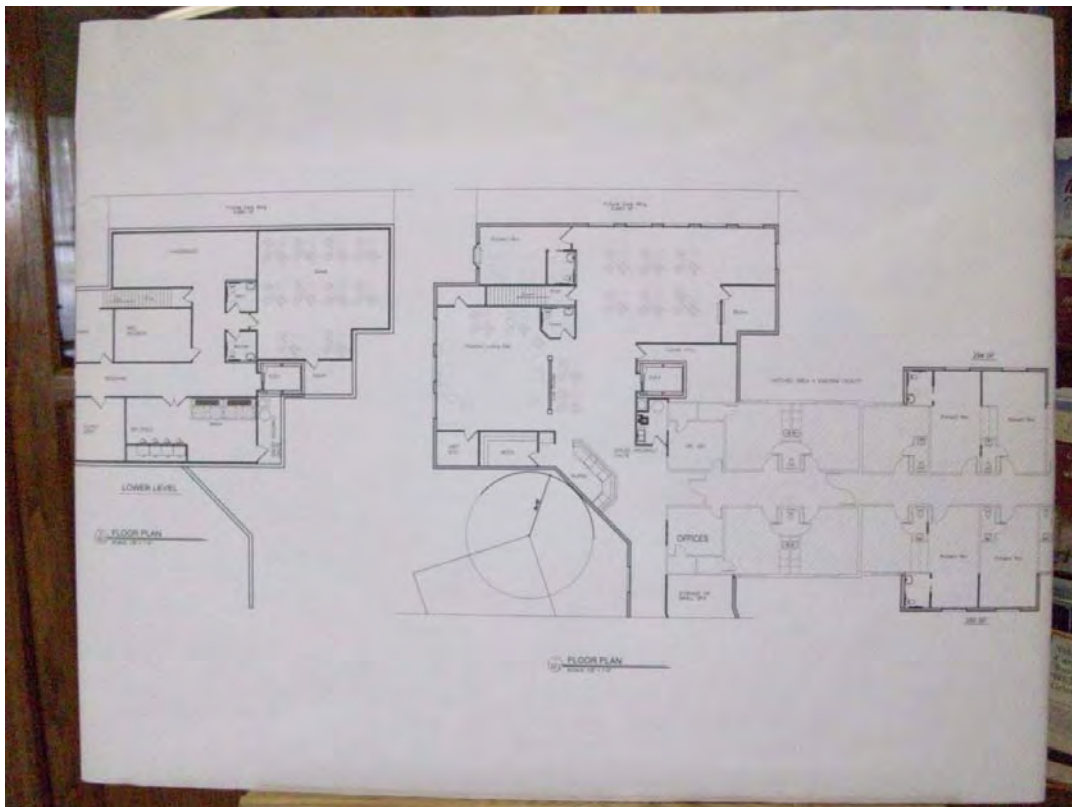
Not only do residents participate in activities, they lead them. They sign-in and separate children by age groups, hide eggs, etc., for the annual Easter egg hunt held at the home. They also run the fall carnival, including manning the games and handing out prizes.

Life at Lacoba is enriched by volunteering, not only by the individuals and businesses in the community who serve the residents but also by the services that residents provide. The local museum and individuals from the community bring in memorabilia for the residents to enjoy. United Missouri Bank worked with the residents to prepare gift boxes for soldiers. They have a full-time volunteer who helps with activities. I was also told about a local student who has

volunteered several days per week for the past several years. One way the residents serve others is by making and giving baby blankets for staff and family members with new babies.

Local churches hold many religious services at Lacoba. They also sponsor monthly birthday parties. Cake and ice cream is provided and each resident receives a card and gift. The Women's Ministry Unity provides Christmas gifts that the residents can purchase for a quarter to give to their families. They also wrap them free of charge.

Lacoba will soon be breaking ground on their next major renovation. They are adding private rooms with private bathrooms and showers, a residential laundry that will be available to residents and family members, a separate entrance for Outpatient Therapy, Wi-Fi throughout, and ADL suites so they ensure that therapy residents are truly ready to go home.



*Renovation Plans*



*Bath Aide Dyanna Guinn, CNA, CMT, RNA*

During my visit, I met Bath Aide Dyanna Guinn, CNA, CMT, RNA. Ms. Guinn was born in California but has "lived everywhere." She considers herself to be from Alabama, since she was there the longest. She is a married mother of three boys. She has lived in the Monett area for the past 13 years and has worked at Lacoba for 10 ½.

We discussed some of the changes that have taken place at Lacoba over the years. She said, "There is no routine." Residents go to bed when they want and get up when they want. The dining room used to be on a schedule; now it is open. Some residents choose to sleep past breakfast time and get something when they get up. It is now "whatever they want to eat, when they want to eat it."

They used to have bath lists based on room numbers. Now residents are assisted with bathing based on their preferences. They even added an evening bath aide. The residents like the changes and "love" the towel warmer. Medication times have also been adjusted to accommodate the residents' schedules. To ensure that everyone is aware of residents' choices, they use "huddle books" to write notes to each other. All employees check the books every day. They know the residents routines and anticipate their needs.

She told me how the ladies especially look forward to time with the beauticians. One resident had his own garden. They have "an amazing therapy team." Therapy staff members are very involved with the residents and work with the aides. They are the best at getting people better so they can go home.



*Jessica Watkins, CNA, CMT, RNA*

I also met Jessica Watkins, CNA, CMT, RNA. Ms. Watkins is originally from Michigan. She moved to the area 11 years ago, right after high-school. The pace is slower, the people are friendlier, and everybody knows everybody in the community. She is also married and has two children.

She has been working at Lacoba for eight years. She worked in another home previously and her grandmother was also in a nursing home. We discussed her experiences and the changes that have taken place over the years. When she first worked there, they started getting residents up at 6:00 in the morning; now they get up whenever. Therapy staff asks residents when they want their therapy. If a resident wants something changed about their medication, she tells the nurse who contacts the physicians to make the change. There are more food choices now and the snack cart has a lot more choices. If the residents request something special, they get it. When new residents move in, they learn what their choices are in the first few days and accommodate them. She said, "We are like a big family here."



*Resident Eva Meek*

I spoke with Resident Eva Meek. Ms. Meek was born and raised at Green Forest, Arkansas. She has lived on a farm all of her life. She attended a one-room elementary school, then went on to attend high school but had to drop out after one year because her parents couldn't afford the tuition. She and her husband were married 60 years and operated a small farm. They raised Black Angus cattle and corn and cane to feed the cattle. Her husband had Alzheimer's disease and lived in a nursing home for the last 14 years of his life. She has four children, 10 grandchildren, "20 something" great grandchildren, and 11 great-great grandchildren.

She has lived at Lacoba four years. "It is a wonderful place to live." She loves to keep busy and there is something going on all the time. I asked about the schedule and she said, "I do what I want to." She especially enjoys stringing beads and making baby quilts to the girls who work there. She was very proud of her three metals she won participates in Golden Age Games. They were for Hog Calling, Jewelry Making, and Bingo. The aides are helpful and nice and the therapy is outstanding. "Keeping us occupied is what they do best."